

CHAMELEON BOOKS

21

A BOOK OF  
ANIMAL VERSE



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*Chosen by*  
E. C. R. HADFIELD

*Illustrated by*  
ERNA PINNER

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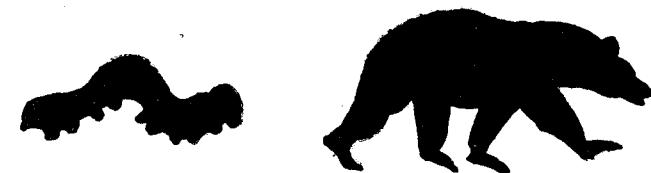
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The Sparrow steals the cherry ripe,  
The Elephant is wise,  
The Blackbird charms you with his pipe,  
The false Hyena cries.  
The Hen guards well her little chicks,  
The Cow—her hoof is slit;  
The Beaver builds with mud and sticks,  
The Lapwing cries 'Peewit.'

The little Wren is very small,  
The Humming-bird is less;  
The Lady-bird is least of all,  
And beautiful in dress.  
The Pelican she loves her young,  
The Stork its parent loves;  
The Woodcock's bill is very long,  
And innocent are Doves.

The streakèd Tiger's fond of blood,  
The Pigeon feeds on peas;  
The Duck will gobble in the mud,  
The Mice will eat your cheese.  
A Lobster's black, when boiled he's red.  
The harmless Lamb must bleed,  
The Cod-fish has a clumsy head,  
The Goose on grass will feed.



The lady in her gown of silk,  
The little Worm may thank;  
The sick man drinks the Ass's milk,  
The Weasel's long and lank.  
The Buck gives us a venison dish,  
When hunted for the spoil;  
The Shark eats up the little fish,  
The Whale produces oil.

The Glow-worm shines the darkest night,  
With lantern in his tail;  
The Turtle is the cit's delight,  
And wears a coat of mail.  
In Germany they hunt the Boar,  
The Bee brings honey home,  
The Ant lays up a winter store,  
The Bear loves honey-comb.

The Eagle has a crooked beak,  
The Plaice has orange spots,  
The Starling, if he's taught, will speak;  
The Ostrich walks and trots.  
The child that does not these things know  
Might well be called a dunce;  
But I in knowledge quick will grow,  
For youth can come but once.

ADELAIDE O'KEEFE

### *The Wolf also shall Dwell*

THE wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

THE BIBLE

### *Deer*

SHY in their herding dwell the fallow deer.  
They are spirits of wild sense. Nobody near  
Comes upon their pastures. There a life they live,  
Of sufficient beauty, phantom, fugitive,  
Treading as in jungles free leopards do,  
Printless as evelight, instant as dew.

The great kine are patient, and home-coming sheep  
Know our bidding. The fallow deer keep  
Delicate and far their counsels wild,  
Never to be folded reconciled  
To the spoiling hand as the poor flocks are;  
Lightfoot, and swift, and unfamiliar,  
These you may not hinder, unconfined  
Beautiful flocks of the mind.

JOHN DRINKWATER

### *The White-footed Deer*

It was a hundred years ago,  
When, by the woodland ways,  
The traveller saw the wild deer drink,  
Or crop the birchen sprays.

Beneath a hill, whose rocky side  
O'erbrowed a grassy mead,  
And fenced a cottage from the wind,  
A deer was wont to feed.

She only came when on the cliffs  
The evening moonlight lay,  
And no man knew the secret haunts  
In which she walked by day.

White were her feet, her forehead showed  
A spot of silvery white,  
That seemed to glimmer like a star  
In autumn's hazy night.

And here, when sang the whippoorwill,  
She cropped the sprouting leaves,  
And here her rustling steps were heard  
On still October eves.

But when the broad midsummer moon  
Rose o'er that grassy lawn,  
Beside the silver-footed deer  
There grazed a spotted fawn.

The cottage dame forbade her son  
To aim the rifle here;  
'It were a sin,' she said, 'to harm  
Or fright that friendly deer.'

'This spot has been my pleasant home  
Ten peaceful years and more;  
And ever when the moonlight shines,  
She feeds before our door.

'The red men say that here she walked  
A thousand moons ago;  
They never raise the war-whoop here,  
And never twang the bow.

'I love to watch her as she feeds,  
And think that all is well,  
While such a gentle creature haunts  
The place in which we dwell.'

The youth obeyed, and sought for game  
In forests far away,  
Where deep in silence and in moss,  
The ancient woodland lay.

But once, in autumn's golden time,  
He ranged the wild in vain,  
Nor roused the pheasant nor the deer,  
And wandered home again.

The crescent moon and crimson eve  
Shone with a mingling light;  
The deer upon the grassy mead  
Was feeding full in sight.

He raised the rifle to his eye,  
And from the cliffs around  
A sudden echo, shrill and sharp,  
Gave back its deadly sound.

Away into the neighbouring wood  
The startled creature flew,  
And crimson drops at morning lay  
Amid the glimmering dew.

Next evening shone the waxing moon  
As sweetly as before;  
The deer upon the grassy mead  
Was seen again no more.

But ere that crescent moon was old,  
By night the red men came,  
And burnt the cottage to the ground,  
And slew the youth and dame.

Now woods have overgrown the mead,  
And hid the cliffs from sight;  
There shrieks the hovering hawk at noon,  
And prowls the fox at night.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

### *The Garden of Eden*

ABOUT them frisking played  
All beasts of the Earth, since wild, and of all chase  
In wood or wilderness, forest or den;  
Sporting the Lion ramp'd, and in his paw  
Dandl'd the Kid; Bears, Tigers, Ounces, Pards  
Gamboll'd before them; the unwieldy Elephant  
To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreath'd  
His lithe proboscis. . . .

JOHN MILTON

### *The Tyger*

TYGER! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? And what dread feet?

Where the hammer? What the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And water'd heaven with their tears,  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand and eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

WILLIAM BLAKE



*Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night.*

*The Dromedary*

IN dreams I see the Dromedary still,  
As once in a gay park I saw him stand.  
A thousand eyes in vulgar wonder scanned  
His hump and hairy neck, and gazed their fill  
At his lank shanks and mocked with laughter shrill.  
He never moved: and if his Eastern land  
Flashed on his eye with stretches of hot sand,  
It wrung no mute appeal from his proud will.

He blinked upon the rabble lazily;  
And still some trace of majesty forlorn  
And a coarse grace remained: his head was high,  
Though his gaunt flanks with a great mange were worn;  
There was not any yearning in his eye,  
But on his lips and nostril infinite scorn.

A. Y. CAMPBELL

*The Giraffes*

I SAW, between a page's turning,  
Shapes on the distant desert burning,  
Shadows running, swift and far,  
Where the white clouds of morning are.

It was the herds of gold giraffes  
That couple with the hippogriffes,  
And run with tireless shoulders bare  
To the more golden desert air:  
The joyous herds that feed on leaves  
The sun from hidden rhizomes weaves,  
And bathe with great, strong-striding flanks  
Where hidden waters press their banks:  
The herds that sleep not through the night,  
But fly through miles of cool blue light,  
Circling never nearer than  
Seven long leagues in sight of Man:  
The gentle herds that die unseen  
In Chi's stone vale of age-carved green,  
And whose delight is still to run  
Like wind between the sands and sun.

STELLA GIBBONS

### *Enjoyment*

PLAY on, ye timid Rabbits!

For I can see ye run,  
Ne'er thinking of a gun,  
Or of the ferret's habits.

Ye sportive Hares! go forcing  
The dewdrop from the bent;  
My mind is not intent  
On greyhounds or on coursing.

Feed on, ye gorgeous Pheasants!  
My sight I do not vex  
With cords about your necks  
Forestalling you for presents.

Go gazing on, and bounding,  
Thou solitary Deer!  
My fancy does not hear  
Hounds braying, and horns sounding.

Each furr'd or feather'd creature,  
Enjoy with me this earth,  
Its life, its love, its mirth,  
And die the death of nature.

THOMAS HOOD

### *A Crocodile*

HARD by the lilied Nile I saw  
A dusky river-dragon stretched along,  
The brown habergeon of his limbs enamelled  
With sanguine almerdines and rainy pearl:  
And on his back there lay a young one sleeping,  
No bigger than a mouse; with eyes like beads,  
And a small fragment of its speckled egg  
Remaining on its harmless, pulpy snout;  
A thing to laugh at, as it gaped to catch  
The baulking, merry flies. In the iron jaws  
Of the great devil-beast, like a pale soul  
Fluttering in rocky hell, lightsomely flew  
A snowy troculus, with roseate beak  
Tearing the hairy leeches from his throat.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

### *Lines*

No pitted toad behind a stone  
But hoards some secret grace;  
The meanest slug with midnight gone  
Has left a silver trace.

No dullest eyes to beauty blind,  
Uplifted to the beast,  
But prove some kin with angel kind,  
Though lowliest and least.

RALPH HODGSON

*Lullaby for a Baby Toad*

SLEEP, my child:  
The dark dock leaf  
Spreads a tent  
To hide your grief.  
The thing you saw  
In the forest pool  
When you bent to drink  
In the evening cool  
Was a mask that He,  
The Wisest Toad,  
Gave us to hide  
Our precious load—  
The jewel that shines  
In the flat toad-head,  
With gracious sapphire  
And changing red.

For if, my toadling,  
Your face were fair  
As the precious jewel  
That glimmers there,  
Man, the jealous,  
Man, the cruel,  
Would look at you  
And suspect the jewel.

So dry the tears  
From your hornèd eyes,  
And eat your supper  
Of dew and flies;  
Curl in the shade  
Of the nettles deep,  
Think of your jewel  
And go to sleep.

STELLA GIBBONS

*A Frog he would A-wooing Go*

A FROG he would a-wooing go,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
Whether his mother would let him or no.  
With a rowley powley, gammon, and spinach,  
Heigho, says Anthony Rowley!

So off he set with his opera hat,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
And on the road he met with a rat.  
With a . . . etc.

‘Pray, Mr. Rat, will you go with me,’  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
‘Kind Mrs. Mousey for to see?’  
With a . . . etc.

When they came to the door of Mousey’s hall,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
They gave a loud knock and they gave a loud call,  
With a . . . etc.

‘Pray, Mrs. Mouse, are you within?’  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
‘Oh, yes, kind sirs, I’m sitting to spin,’  
With a . . . etc.

‘Pray, Mrs. Mouse, will you give us some beer?’  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
‘For Froggy and I are fond of good cheer.’  
With a . . . etc.

‘Pray, Mr. Frog, will you give us a song?’  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
‘But let it be something that’s not very long.’  
With a . . . etc.

'Indeed, Mrs. Mouse,' replied the Frog,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
'A cold has made me as hoarse as a dog.'  
With a . . . etc.

'Since you have caught cold, Mr. Frog,' Mousey said,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
'I'll sing you a song that I have just made.'  
With a . . . etc.

But while they were all a-merry-making,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
A cat and her kittens came tumbling in.  
With a . . . etc.

The cat she seized the rat by the crown;  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
The kittens they pulled the little mouse down.  
With a . . . etc.

This put Mr. Frog in a terrible fright,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
He took up his hat, and he wished them good-night,  
With a . . . etc.

But as Froggy was crossing over a brook,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
A lily-white duck came and gobbled him up.  
With a . . . etc.

So there was an end of one, two, and three,  
Heigho, says Rowley,  
The Rat, the Mouse, and the little Frog-gee!  
With a rowley powley, gammon, and spinach,  
Heigho, says Anthony Rowley!

ANONYMOUS

### *The Snail*

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,  
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,  
As if he grew there, house and all  
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,  
When danger imminent betides  
Of storm, or other harm besides  
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,  
His self-collecting power is such,  
He shrinks into his house, with much  
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,  
Except himself has chattels none,  
Well satisfied to be his own  
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,  
Nor partner of his banquet needs,  
And if he meets one, only feeds  
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,  
(He and his house are so combin'd)  
If, finding it, he fails to find  
Its master.

V. BOURNE

### *The Glow-worm*

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,  
A worm is known to stray;  
That shows by night a lucid beam,  
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,  
From whence his rays proceed;  
Some give that honour to his tail,  
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of might  
That kindles up the skies,  
Gives *him* a modicum of light  
Proportion'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent nature meant,  
By such a lamp bestow'd,  
To bid the trav'ler as he went,  
Be careful where he trod:

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light  
Might serve, however small,  
To shew a stumbling stone by night,  
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine  
Is legible and plain,  
'Tis pow'r almighty bids him shine,  
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme  
Teach humbler thoughts to you,  
Since such a reptile has its gem,  
And boasts its splendour too.

WILLIAM COWPER

### *You Spotted Snakes*

You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;  
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong;  
Come not near our fairy queen.

Philomel, with melody,  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla!  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh;  
So good night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!  
Beetles black, approach not near;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

Philomel, with melody,  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla!  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh;  
So good night, with lullaby.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

### *The Viper*

BAREFOOT I went and made no sound;  
    The earth was hot beneath:  
The air was quivering around,  
The circling kestrel eyed the ground  
    And hung above the heath.

There in the pathway stretched along  
    The lovely serpent lay:  
She reared not up the heath among,  
She bowed her head, she sheathed her tongue,  
    And shining stole away.

Fair was the brave embroidered dress,  
    Fairer the gold eyes shone:  
Loving her not, yet did I bless  
The fallen angel's comeliness;  
    And gazed when she had gone.

RUTH PITTER

### *The Serpent*

WAKE the serpent not—lest he  
Should not know the way to go—  
Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping  
Through the deep grass of the meadow!  
Not a bee shall hear him creeping,  
Not a may-fly shall awaken  
From its cradling blue-bell shaken,  
Not the starlight as he's sliding  
Through the grass with silent gliding.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

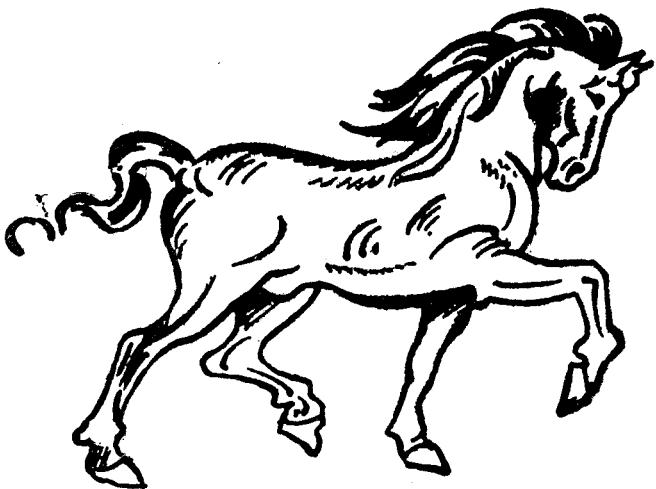
### *The Water-Snakes*

BEYOND the shadow of the ship,  
    I watched the water-snakes:  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
    Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
    I watched their rich attire:  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track  
    Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue  
    Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
    And I blessed them unaware!  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
    And I blessed them unaware.

S. T. COLERIDGE



### *The War Horse*

HAST thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?  
Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.  
He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.  
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.  
The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.  
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.  
He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

THE BIBLE

### *The Council of Horses*

UPON a time a neighing steed,  
Who graz'd among a numerous breed,  
With mutiny had fired the train,  
And spread dissension through the plain.  
On matters that concern'd the state  
The council met in grand debate.  
A colt whose eyeballs flamed with ire,  
Elate with strength and youthful fire,  
In haste stept forth before the rest,  
And thus the listening throng address'd.

‘Goodness, how abject is our race,  
Condemn'd to slavery and disgrace!  
Shall we our servitude retain,  
Because our sires have borne the chain?  
Consider, friends! your strength and might;  
’Tis conquest to assert your right.  
How cumbrous is the gilded coach!  
The pride of men is our reproach.  
Were we design'd for daily toil,  
To drag the ploughshare through the soil,  
To sweat in harness through the road,  
To groan beneath the carrier's load?  
How feeble are the two-legg'd kind!  
What force is in our nerves combin'd!  
Shall then our nobler jaws submit  
To foam and champ the galling bit?  
Shall haughty man my back bestride?  
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side?  
Forbid it, heavens! reject the rein;  
Your shame, your infamy, disdain.  
Let him the lion first control,  
And still the tiger's famish'd growl.

Let us, like them, our freedom claim,  
And make him tremble at our name.  
A general nod approv'd the cause,  
And all the circle neigh'd applause.  
When, lo! with grave and solemn pace,  
A steed advanc'd before the race,  
With age and long experience wise;  
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,  
And, to the murmur of the train,  
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain.  
‘When I had health and strength like you  
The toils of servitude I knew;  
Now grateful man rewards my pains,  
And gives me all these wide domains.  
At will I crop the year's increase;  
My latter life is rest and peace.  
I grant, to man we lend our pains,  
And aid him to correct the plains;  
But doth not he divide the care,  
Through all the labours of the year?  
How many thousand structures rise,  
To fence us from inclement skies!  
For us he bears the sultry day,  
And stores up all our winter's hay.  
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain;  
We share the toil and share the grain.  
Since every creature was decreed  
To aid each other's mutual need,  
Appease your discontented mind,  
And act the part by heaven assign'd.  
The tumult ceas'd, the colt submitted,  
And, like his ancestors, was bitted.

J. GAY

### *Poor Old Horse*

My clothing was once of the linsey woolsey fine,  
My tail it grew in length, my coat did likewise shine;  
But now I'm growing old, my beauty does decay,  
My master frowns upon me; one day I heard him say,  
‘Poor old horse.’

Once I was kept in the stable snug and warm,  
To keep my tender limbs from any cold or harm;  
But now, in open fields, I am forced for to go,  
In all sorts of weather, let it be hail, rain, freeze or snow.  
‘Poor old horse.’

Once I was fed on the very best corn and hay  
That ever grew in yon fields, or in yon meadows gay;  
But now there's no such doing can I find at all,  
I'm glad to pick the green sprouts that grow behind yon  
wall.  
‘Poor old horse.’

‘You are old, you are cold, you are deaf, dull, dumb and  
slow,  
You are not fit for anything, or in my team to draw,  
You have eaten all my hay, you have spoiled all my straw  
So hang him, whip, stick him, to the huntsman let him go.  
‘Poor old horse.’

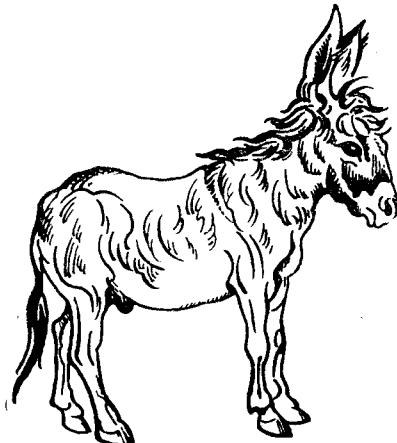
My hide unto the tanners then would freely give,  
My body to the hound dogs, I would rather die than live,  
Likewise my poor old bones that have carried you many  
a mile,  
Over hedges, ditches, brooks, bridges, likewise gates and  
stiles.  
‘Poor old horse.’

ANONYMOUS

### *The Donkey*

WHEN fishes flew and forests walked  
    And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
    Then surely I was born;  
With monstrous head and sickening cry  
    And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
    Of all four-footed things.  
  
The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
    Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,  
    I keep my secret still.  
  
Fools! For I also had my hour;  
    One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
    And palms before my feet.

G. K. CHESTERTON



34

### *I had a Little Pony*

I HAD a little pony,  
    His name was Dapple-gray,  
I lent him to a lady,  
    To ride a mile away;  
She whipped him, she slashed him,  
    She rode him through the mire;  
I would not lend my pony now  
    For all the lady's hire.

I had a little hobby-horse,  
    And it was dapple-gray;  
Its head was made of peastraw,  
    Its tail was made of hay.  
I sold it to an old woman  
    For a copper groat;  
And I'll not sing my song again  
    Without a new coat.

ANONYMOUS

### *Epitaph on a Hare*

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
    Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
    Nor ear heard huntsman's hollo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
    Who, nursed with tender care,  
And to domestic bounds confined,  
    Was still a wild Jack-hare.

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Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance every night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
And milk, and oats, and straw,  
Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
With sand to scour his maw.

'On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
On pippin's russet peel;  
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,  
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon he loved to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
For then he lost his fear;  
But most before approaching showers,  
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away,  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut-shade  
He finds his long last home,  
And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
Must soon partake his grave.

WILLIAM COWPER

*Mary had a Little Lamb*

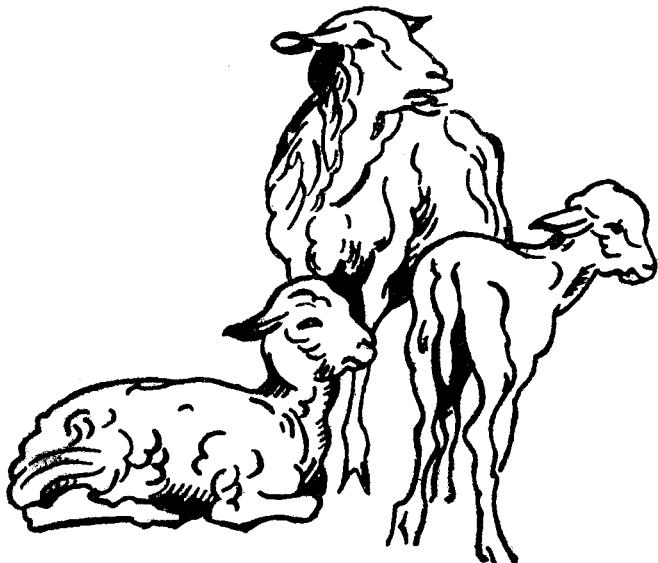
MARY had a little lamb,  
Its fleece was white as snow;  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.

He followed her to school one day;  
That was against the rules;  
It made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned him out,  
But still he lingered near,  
And waited patiently about  
Till Mary did appear.

Then he ran to her, and laid  
His head upon her arm,  
As if he said, 'I'm not afraid,—  
You'll keep me from all harm.'

ANONYMOUS



*Bah!*

WHEN I chanced to look over the wall in the glade—  
 I was taking a walk with Mamma—  
 I saw an old ewe sitting down in the shade,  
 And she opened her mouth and said, ‘Bah!’

That’s always what happens when sheep I come near,  
 They watch me approach from afar,  
 And out of the turnips and clover I hear  
 A horrid ironical ‘Bah!’

What can I have done? I can’t understand—  
 The cantankerous creatures they are!  
 I never throw stones, I hold dear Mamma’s hand,  
 And I don’t think they *ought* to say ‘Bah!’

WALTER DE LA MARE

*The Lambs of Grasmere, 1860*

THE upland flocks grew starved and thinned:  
 Their shepherds scarce could feed the lambs  
 Whose milkless mothers butted them,  
 Or who were orphaned of their dams.  
 The lambs athirst for mother’s milk  
 Filled all the place with piteous sounds:  
 Their mothers’ bones made white for miles  
 The pastureless wet pasture grounds.

Day after day, night after night,  
 From lamb to lamb the shepherds went,  
 With teapots for the bleating mouths,  
 Instead of nature’s nourishment.  
 The little shivering gaping things  
 Soon knew the step that brought them aid,  
 And fondled the protecting hand,  
 And rubbed it with a woolly head.

Then, as the days waxed on to weeks,  
 It was a pretty sight to see  
 These lambs with frisky heads and tails  
 Skipping and leaping on the lea,  
 Bleating in tender, trustful tones,  
 Resting on rocky crag or mound,  
 And following the beloved feet  
 That once had sought for them and found.

These very shepherds of their flocks,  
 These loving lambs so meek to please,  
 Are worthy of recording words  
 And honour in their due degrees:

So I might live a hundred years,  
And roam from strand to foreign strand,  
Yet not forget this flooded spring  
And scarce-saved lambs of Westmoreland.

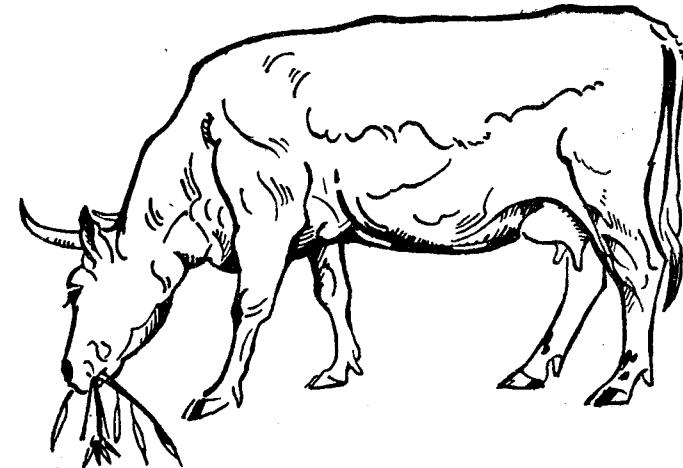
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

### *The Lamb*

LITTLE Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is callèd by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and he is mild;  
He became a little child.  
I a child, and thou a lamb,  
We are callèd by his name.  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE



### *The Cow*

THE friendly cow all red and white,  
I love with all my heart:  
She gives me cream with all her might,  
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,  
And yet she cannot stray,  
All in the pleasant open air,  
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass  
And wet with all the showers,  
She walks among the meadow grass  
And eats the meadow flowers.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

### *Thank you, Pretty Cow*

THANK you, pretty cow, that made  
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,  
Every day and every night,  
Warm, and fresh, and sweet, and white.

Do not chew the hemlock rank,  
Growing on the weedy bank;  
But the yellow cowslips eat,  
They will make it very sweet.

Where the purple violet grows,  
Where the bubbling water flows,  
Where the grass is fresh and fine,  
Pretty cow, go there and dine.

JANE AND ANN TAYLOR

### *Three Blind Mice*

THREE blind mice, see how they run!  
They all ran after the farmer's wife,  
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,  
Did you ever hear such a thing in your life?

Three blind mice.

ANONYMOUS

### *The Mouse's Petition*

OH, hear a pensive prisoner's prayer,  
For liberty that sighs;  
And never let thine heart be shut  
Against the wretch's cries!

For here forlorn and sad I sit,  
Within the wiry grate;  
And tremble at the approaching morn,  
Which brings impending fate.

If e'er thy breast with freedom glowed,  
And spurned a tyrant's chain,  
Let not thy strong oppressive force  
A free-born mouse detain!

Oh, do not stain with guiltless blood  
Thy hospitable hearth!  
Nor triumph that thy wiles betrayed  
A prize so little worth.

The scattered gleanings of a feast  
My frugal meals supply;  
But if thy unrelenting heart  
That slender boon deny—

The cheerful light, the vital air,  
Are blessings widely given;  
Let Nature's commoners enjoy  
The common gifts of heaven.

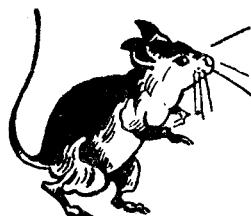
Beware, lest in the worm you crush,  
A brother's soul you find;  
And tremble lest thy luckless hand  
Dislodge a kindred mind.

Or if this transient gleam of day  
Be *all* the life we share,  
Let pity plead within thy breast,  
That little *all* to spare.

So may thy hospitable board  
With health and peace be crowned;  
And every charm of heartfelt ease  
Beneath thy roof be found.

So when destruction works unseen,  
Which man, like mice, may share,  
May some kind angel clear thy path,  
And break the hidden snare.

A. L. BARBAULD



*To a Mouse, on turning her up in her Nest  
with the Plough, November 1785*

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
Wi' bickering brattle!  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken nature's social union,  
An' justifies that ill opinion,  
Which makes thee startle,  
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;  
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!  
A daimen-icker in a thrave  
'S a sma' request:  
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,  
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!  
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!  
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,  
O' foggage green!  
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',  
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,  
An' weary winter comin' fast,  
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
Thou thought to dwell,  
Till crash! the cruel coulter past,  
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,  
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!  
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,  
    But house or hald,  
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,  
    An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,  
In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men  
    Gang aft a-gley,  
An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain,  
    For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e  
    On prospects drear!  
An' forward, tho' I canna see,  
    I guess an' fear!

ROBERT BURNS

### *Rats*

WHEN dusk is falling  
And the short winter evening  
Begins to settle on the land,  
And the air is heavy with wet drifting mist;  
Out of their innumerable holes and burrows  
Come the rats.

Scurrying in swift procession  
Through the shifting gloom;  
Stealing silently close to walls  
And the fallen trunks of trees;  
Keeping in the shadows, crossing with precipitate  
    haste  
The beam of light from the window;  
They go out upon their foraging.

There are crusts in the garden,  
Put out for the frost-starved birds,  
On these they seize,  
Gnawing them ravenously with eager jaws,  
Their keen ears alert for the slightest sound,  
Their little beady eyes darting watchful glances  
Left and right;  
Then on again into the night  
By hunger driven.

Until the darkness comes,  
And the shapes of wall and house and hedge,  
And fallen tree,  
Merge into the blackness of the misty night;  
Then the moving forms of the rats  
Disappear from sight.

But for many hours  
Out of the stillness of the winter night  
Small stealthy cries and furtive scurrys  
Tell where still loot and spoil  
These midnight scavengers.

FRANK EYRE

*On a Dog Collar*

'I AM His Highness' dog at Kew;  
Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?'

ALEXANDER POPE

*Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*

Good people all, of every sort,  
Give ear unto my song;  
And if you find it wond'rous short,  
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,  
Of whom the world might say,  
That still a godly race he ran,  
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,  
To comfort friends and foes;  
The naked every day he clad,  
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,  
As many dogs there be,  
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,  
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;  
But when a pique began,  
The dog, to gain some private ends,  
Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets,  
The wond'ring neighbours ran,  
And swore the dog had lost its wits,  
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad  
To every Christian eye;  
And while they swore the dog was mad,  
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,  
That showed the rogues they lied:  
The man recovered of the bite,  
The dog it was that died.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

*To Flush, my Dog*

LIKE a lady's ringlets brown,  
Flow thy silken ears adown  
Either side demurely,  
Of thy silver-suited breast,  
Shining out from all the rest  
Of thy body purely.

Darkly brown thy body is,  
Till the sunshine, striking this,  
Alchemize its dulness;  
When the sleek curls manifold  
Flash all over into gold,  
With a burnished fullness.

Underneath my stroking hand  
Startled eyes of hazel bland  
    Kindling, growing larger,  
Up thou leapest with a spring,  
Full of prank and curveting,  
    Leaping like a charger.

Leap! thy broad tail waves a light;  
Leap! thy slender feet are bright,  
    Canopied in fringes.  
Leap! those tasselled ears of thine  
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,  
    Down their golden inches.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,  
Pretty collars make thee fine,  
    Sugared milk make fat thee!  
Pleasures wag on in thy tail—  
Hands of gentle motion fail  
    Nevermore, to pat thee!

Downy pillow take thy head,  
Silken coverlid bestead,  
    Sunshine help thy sleeping!  
No fly's buzzing wake thee up—  
No man break thy purple cup  
    Set for drinking deep in.

E. B. BROWNING

### *Poor Dog Tray*

ON the green banks of Shannon when Sheelah was nigh,  
No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I;  
No harp like my own could so cheerily play,  
And wherever I went was my poor dog Tray.

When at last I was forced from my Sheelah to part,  
She said (while the sorrow was big at her heart),  
Oh! remember your Sheelah when far, far away:  
And be kind, my dear Pat, to our poor dog Tray.

Poor dog! he was faithful and kind to be sure,  
And he constantly loved me although I was poor;  
When the sour-looking folk sent me heartless away,  
I had always a friend in my poor dog Tray.

When the road was so dark, and the night was so cold  
And Pat and his dog were grown weary and old,  
How snugly we slept in my old coat of grey,  
And he lick'd me for kindness—my old dog Tray.

Though my wallet was scant I remember'd his case,  
Nor refused my last crust to his pitiful face;  
But he died at my feet on a cold winter day,  
And I play'd a sad lament for my poor dog Tray.

Where now shall I go, poor, forsaken, and blind?  
Can I find one to guide me, so faithful and kind?  
To my sweet native village, so far, far away,  
I can never more return with my poor dog Tray.

THOMAS CAMPBELL



*To a Cat*

STATELY, kindly, lordly friend,  
Condescend  
Here to sit by me, and turn  
Glorious eyes that smile and burn,  
Golden eyes, love's lustrous meed,  
On the golden page I read.

All your wondrous wealth of hair,  
Dark and fair,  
Silken-shaggy, soft and bright  
As the clouds and beams of night,  
Pays my reverent hand's caress  
Back with friendlier gentleness.

Dogs may fawn on all and some  
As they come;  
You, a friend of loftier mind,  
Answer friends alone in kind.  
Just your foot upon my hand  
Softly bids it understand.

A. C. SWINBURNE

*On a Favourite Cat, drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes*

"TWAS on a lofty vase's side,  
Where China's gayest art had dyed  
The azure flowers that blow:  
Demurest of the tabby kind,  
The pensive Selima reclined,  
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared:  
The fair round face, the snowy beard,  
The velvet of her paws,  
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,  
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,  
She saw: and purred applause.

Still had she gazed, but 'midst the tide  
Two angel forms were seen to glide,  
The Genii of the stream:  
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue  
Through richest purple to the view  
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:  
A whisker first and then a claw,  
With many an ardent wish,  
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.  
What female heart can gold despise?  
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent  
Again she stretched, again she bent,  
Nor knew the gulf between.  
(Malignant Fate sat by and smiled.)  
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,  
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood  
She mewed to ev'ry wat'ry god  
    Some speedy aid to send.  
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred:  
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—  
    A fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,  
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,  
    And be with caution bold.  
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes  
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,  
    Nor all that glisters, gold.

THOMAS GRAY

### *The Kitten*

WHENCE hast thou then, thou witless puss!  
The magic power to charm us thus?  
Is it that in thy glaring eye  
And rapid movements, we descry—  
Whilst we at ease, secure from ill,  
The chimney corner snugly fill—  
A lion darting on its prey,  
A tiger at his ruthless play?  
Or is it that in thee we trace  
With all thy varied wanton grace,  
An emblem, viewed with kindred eye,  
Of tricky, restless infancy?  
Ah! many a lightly sportive child,  
Who hath like thee our wits beguiled,  
To dull and sober manhood grown,  
With strange recoil our hearts disown.  
And so, poor kit! must thou endure,

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When thou becom' st a cat demure,  
Full many a cuff and angry word,  
Chased roughly from the tempting board,  
But yet, for that thou hast, I ween,  
So oft our favoured playmate been,  
Soft be the change which thou shalt prove!  
When time hath spoiled thee of our love,  
Still be thou deemed by housewife fat  
A comely, careful, mousing cat,  
Whose dish is, for the public good,  
Replenished oft with savoury food.  
Nor, when thy span of life is past,  
Be thou to pond or dunghill cast,  
But, gently borne on goodman's spade,  
Beneath the decent sod be laid;  
And children show with glistening eyes  
The place where poor old pussy lies.

JOANNA BAILLIE

### *Kilkenny Cats*

THERE once were two cats of Kilkenny,  
Each thought there was one cat too many;  
So they fought and they fit,  
And they scratched and they bit,  
Till, excepting their nails  
And the tips of their tails,  
Instead of two cats there weren't any.

ANONYMOUS

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### *The Kitten and the Falling Leaves*

SEE the kitten on the wall,  
Sporting with the leaves that fall,  
Withered leaves—one—two—and three—  
From the lofty elder tree!  
Through the calm and frosty air  
Of this morning bright and fair,  
Eddying round and round they sink  
Softly, slowly: one might think  
From the motions that are made  
Every little leaf conveyed  
Sylph or Fairy hither tending  
To this lower world descending,  
Each invisible and mute,  
In his wavering parachute.

But the Kitten, how she starts,  
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!  
First at one, and then its fellow,  
Just as light and just as yellow;  
There are many now—now one—  
Now they stop and there are none:  
What intensesness of desire  
In her upward eye of fire,  
With a tiger-leap half-way  
Now she meets the coming prey,  
Lets it go as fast, and then  
Has it in her power again:  
Now she works with three or four,  
Like an Indian conjuror;  
Quick as he in feats of art,  
Far beyond in joy of heart.

Were her antics played in the eye  
Of a thousand standers-by,  
Clapping hands with shout and stare,  
What would little Tabby care  
For the plaudits of the crowd?  
Over happy to be proud,  
Over wealthy in the treasure  
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

### *If you have a Tabby-Cat*

If you have a tabby-cat,  
If you want to please him,  
Tie a ribbon round his neck,  
Never, never tease him.  
Tabby-cats are grave and stately,  
And they like to act sedately.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

### *The Whale*

AT every stroke his brazen fins do take,  
More circles in the broken sea they make  
Than cannon's voices, when the air they tear:  
His ribs are pillars, and his high arch'd roof  
Of bark that blunts best steel, is thunder-proof:  
Swim in him swallow'd dolphins, without fear,  
And feel no sides, as if his vast womb were  
Some inland sea, and ever as he went  
He spouted rivers up, as if he meant  
To join our seas, with seas above the firmament.

He hunts not fish, but as an officer,  
Stays in his court, at his own net, and there  
All suitors of all sorts themselves enthrall;  
So on his back lies this whale wantoning,  
And in his gulf-like throat, sucks every thing  
That passeth near. Fish chaseth fish, and all,  
Flier and follower, in this whirlpool fall.

JOHN DONNE

### *Whale Song*

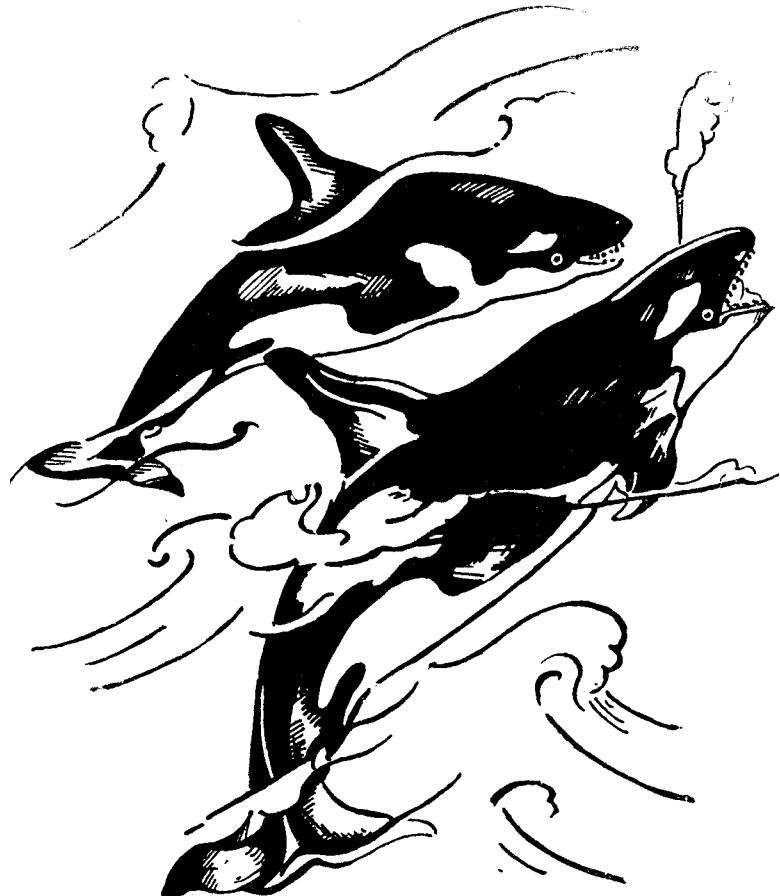
Oh, the rare old whale, 'mid storm and gale  
In his ocean home will be;  
A giant in might, where might is right,  
And King of the boundless sea.

ANONYMOUS

### *The Kraken*

Below the thunders of the upper deep;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth; faintest sunlights flee  
About his shadowy sides: above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell  
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant fins the slumbering green.  
There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;  
Then once by men and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON



*King of the boundless sea*

### *The Dragon of Wantley*

OLD stories tell how Hercules  
A dragon slew at Lerna,  
With seven heads and fourteen eyes,  
To see and well discern-a:  
But he had a club, this dragon to drub,  
Or he ne'er had done it, I warrant ye:  
But More of More-hall, with nothing at all,  
He slew the dragon of Wantley.  
  
This dragon had two furious wings,  
Each one upon each shoulder;  
With a sting in his tail as long as a flail,  
Which made him bolder and bolder.  
He had long claws, and in his jaws  
Four and forty teeth of iron;  
With a hide as tough as any buff,  
Which did him round environ.  
  
Have you not heard how the Trojan horse  
Held seventy men in his belly?  
This dragon was not quite so big,  
But very near, I'll tell ye;  
Devour'd he poor children three,  
That could not with him grapple  
And at one sup he ate them up,  
As one would eat an apple.  
  
All sorts of cattle this dragon would eat,  
Some say he ate up trees,  
And that the forests sure he would  
Devour up by degrees:  
For houses and churches were to him geese and turkies;  
He ate all and left none behind,  
But some stones, dear Jack, that he could not crack,  
Which on the hills you will find.

Hard by a furious knight there dwelt;  
Men, women, girls, and boys,  
Sighing and sobbing came to his lodging,  
And made a hideous noise.  
O save us all, More of More-hall,  
Thou peerless knight of these woods;  
Do but slay this dragon, who won't leave us a rag on,  
We'll give thee all our goods.

This being done, he did engage  
To hew the dragon down;  
But first he went new armour to  
Bespeak at Sheffield town;  
With spikes all about, not within but without,  
Of steel so sharp and strong,  
But behind and before, arms, legs, and all o'er,  
Some five or six inches long.

Had you but seen him in this dress  
How fierce he look'd, and how big,  
You would have thought him for to be  
Some Egyptian porcupig;  
He frightened all, cats, dogs, and all,  
Each cow, each horse, and each hog:  
For fear they did flee, for they took him to be  
Some strange, outlandish hedge-hog.

To see this fight all people then  
Got up on trees and houses,  
On churches, some, and chimneys too;  
But these put on their trousers,  
Not to spoil their hose. As soon as he rose,  
To make him strong and mighty,  
He drank, by the tale, six pots of ale  
And a quart of aqua-vitae.

It is not strength that always wins,  
 For wit doth strength excel;  
 Which made our cunning champion  
 Creep down into a well,  
 Where he did think this dragon would drink,  
 And so he did in truth;  
 And as he stoop'd low, he rose up and cried 'boh!'  
 And kick'd him in the mouth.

Oh, quoth the dragon with a deep sigh  
 And turned six times together,  
 Sobbing and tearing, cursing and swearing,  
 Out of his throat of leather;  
 More of More-hall, O thou rascal,  
 Would I had seen thee never;  
 With the thing at thy foot, thou has prick'd my throat  
 And I'm quite undone for ever.

Murder, murder, the dragon cried,  
 Alack, alack, for grief;  
 Had you but miss'd that place, you could  
 Have done me no mischief.  
 Then his head he shaked, trembled and quaked,  
 And down he laid and cried;  
 First on one knee, then on back tumbled he;  
 So groan'd, and kick'd, and died.

ANONYMOUS

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